industry wants to do it: they want to have more profits. But there cannot be more profits at the cost of the livelihood of such a vast number of people in the country. If this injustice goes on, 40 lakh families dependent on jute will also be pushed below the poverty line. Many of them are already below the poverty line. So, this is the situation prevailing at the moment, and unless there is a determined pressure on the part of those who want this industry to survive, the counter-pressure from the cer t and other industries is so much th it is quite possible that the Government would be influenced by them.

Unfortunately, the Minister of Textiles who was here till a few minutes ago, is no longer here. We could not meet the Textiles Ministers. But I understand that next week the Cabinet is going to discuss this legislation. When the Cabinet discusses this legislation, I hope they will not revoke the legislation or will not amend the Order which has been passed with the legislation. And nothing should be done which harms the interests of the jute industry or the interests of the people in the eastern region, in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Tripura, and also Andhra. Through you, Madam, I ask them to ensure this. Thank you.

SHRI JOYANTA ROY (West Bengal): Through you, Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the serious crisis which the traditional jute industry is facing. As Dr. Biplab Dasgupta has mentioned, it is very necessary to protect this industry because it concerns not only 3.5 lakhs of industrial workers but also more than 45 lakh jute-growing families. Therefore, to protect these 48 lakh families from total extinction, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to make sure that the law enforcing agency can at least protect the interests of the jute industry.

Madam, you know that in 1987 the Jute Packaging Material Act was passed by Parliament, but the law enforcing agency is doing nothing, and for that reason the entire industry is on the verge of total extinction. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Government to protect the entire industry and the growers from total destruction, from total extinction.

A large scale campaign is being made by the cement industry and other industries that seepage and high cost are the major hinderances for the jute industry. But technical experts' opinion is that this allegation of seepage and handling loss does not hold here. Experts' opinion is that this problem of seepage and handling loss is more in polythene packages, I mean, synthetic sacks.

Therefore, this traditional industry deserves total protection from the Government. The law has already been enacted. So, the Textile Ministry should ensure that this law is enforced in toto. This is my submission, Madam. I hope that the Government will take appropriate measures in this respect.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we have one small item of business.

Statement Regarding Ordinance by Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Madam, notice has been given for Zero Hour Mention today regarding Regional Rural Bank employees. They are holding their protests today. Kindly allow it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister perform his duty so that he can go.

STATEMENT REGARDING ORDINANCE

Explaining Circumstances Necessitating Immediate Legislation by Sugar Export Promotion (Repeal) Ordinance, 1997

खाद्य मंत्री तथा नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री देवेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव): महोदया, मैं उन परिस्थितियों को स्पष्ट करने वाला एक विवरण (अंग्रेजी तथा हिंदी में) सभा पटल पर रख रहा हूं जिनके कारण चीनी निर्यात संवर्धन

(निरसन) अध्यादेश, 1997 द्वारा तत्काल विधान बनाए जाने की आवश्यकता पड़ी।

RE. NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF SIXTH BIPARTITE PAY-STRUCTURE AGREEMENT FOR REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey and Dr. Radhakrishna Murty. You have just a few minutes for whatever you want to say.

श्रीमती चन्द्रकला पांडेय (पश्चिमी बंगाल): माननीय उपसभापति महोदया, आपके माध्यम से मैं सरकार से ग्रामीण बैंकों के कर्मचारियों की मांगों के बारे में विचार करने का विनम्र निवेदन कर रही हूं।

मैडम, आज देश भर के करीब 70,000 ग्रामीण बैंक कर्मचारी अपनी मांगों की पूर्ति के लिए एक दिन की हड़ताल पर हैं। यह हड़ताल आल इंडिया बैंक वर्कर्स आर्गेनाइजेशन और आल इंडिया ग्रामीण बैंक आफिसर्स आर्गेनाइजेशन के आह्वान पर हो रही है। कर्मचारियों की तीन मांगे हैं। पहली ट्रिब्यूनल अवार्ड के अनुसार ग्रामीण बैंक के कर्मचारियों को अन्य बैंक के कर्मचारियों के समान सुविधाएं दी जाएं तथा 6ठे वेतन समझौते को लागू किया जाए। दूसरी, भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा गठित मोहालिक कमेटी को भंग किया जाए और तीसरी है सरकार द्वारा लोकल एरिया प्रायवेट बैंक गठित करने के प्रस्ताव को वापस लिया जाए।

महोदया, हमारा देश मूलतः गांवों का देश है। गांवों के विकास पर ही समस्त देश का सामग्रिक विकास निर्भर करता है। ये ग्रामीण बैंक सीधे-सीधे किसानों, गांव के छोटे उद्योगों और स्थानीय विकास के हितों से जुड़े रहते हैं। सरकार का यह प्रस्ताव कि लोकल एरिया में प्रायवेट बैंक गठित किए जाएं, ग्रामीण बैंकों और उनके कर्मचारियों को बेमौत मरने के लिए छोड़ देगा। साथ ही अगर ग्रामीण बैंक बंद हो गए तो फिर से मुनाफाखोर महाजनों को उभरने का बढ़ावा मिलेगा। यह जाहिर है कि बड़े विदेशी बैंक अपनी शाखाएं गांवों में नहीं खोलने जाएंगे। अगर स्टेट बैंक की कुछ शाखाएं खुलें भी तो साइन बोर्ड से भले ही वे गांवों में हों, इनका संबंध शहरी हितों से ही होगा। सोशल कास्ट बेनिफिट एनेलिसिस की जाए तो ग्रामीण बैंकों को बचाना जरूरी है। इसलिए पुनः मैं एक बार आपसे मांग करती हूं कि ग्रामीण बैंक के कर्मचारियों की मांगों पर विचार करते हुए सरकार उनके प्रति न्याय करे।

आपने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया। इसके लिए धन्यवाद।

1.00 PM

SHRI Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY (Andhra Pradesh): While associating myself with the points raised by my colleague, I would like to add just one or two points with your permission.

These rural banks, otherwise called Gramin banks, were the brainchild of our great leader, Smt. Indira Gandhi and they were set up in 1975. During the last two decades, these banks have spread into all corners of India, especially in rural India, with 196 Gramin banks having about 15,000 branches and about 25,000 workers. These workers are doing a commendable job in the rural areas. Their work is very heavy and hard, because they have to maintain a vast number of accounts with small amounts and they have to work in rural areas, where no facilities are available for them and for their families. Their salaries and allowances were not at par with the sponsoring banks. On the advice of the Supreme Court the Government of India had constituted a tribunal called the National Industrial Tribunal (NIT) with Justice Obul Reddy as the Chairman. He had given an award in 1990 itself saying that the employees of the rural banks should have all the benefits—salaries, allowances, pensions, promotions and terminal benefits—on par with sponsoring banks. Secondly the fourth and fifth bipartite settlement agreements were also implemented by the Government. But, now, when the sixth agreement has come in 1995, the Government is showing its back and is dragging its feet and is almost refusing to implement it.

As a result 25,000 workers and their officers are on a one-day token strike just to voice their demands. I request, through the Chair, the Government to have a sympathetic hearing of the problems of these 25,000 people and also to